Amendments to the Claims:

This claim listing will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claim Listing:

1-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) A method for providing a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide with reduced side effects of splenomegaly and depletion of platelets when administered to a mammal, ~~wherein the oligonucleotide has from 17 to 35 nucleotides,~~ wherein the C and/or G of each CpG dinucleotide present in the oligonucleotide is modified with a 2'-O-methyl, wherein the oligonucleotide ~~is~~ consists of 17 to 35 nucleotides complementary to ~~a~~ a genomic region or gene for which inhibition of expression is desired, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein such genomic region or gene or RNA transcript is from a eukaryotic or prokaryotic pathogen, or a virus selected from the group consisting of human immunodeficiency virus (type 1 or 2), influenza virus, herpes simplex virus (type 1 or 2), Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegalovirus, respiratory syncytial virus, hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus, and administering the oligonucleotide to the mammal.

17. (Currently amended) A method for providing a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide with reduced side effects of splenomegaly and depletion of platelets to an individual with a disease caused by aberrant gene expression, wherein the C and/or G of each CpG dinucleotide present in the oligonucleotide is modified with a 2'-O-methyl, wherein the oligonucleotide ~~has~~ consists of from 17 to 35 nucleotides~~, and is~~ complementary to a ~~a~~ genomic region or gene that is aberrantly expressed, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein such genomic region or gene or RNA transcript is from a eukaryotic or prokaryotic pathogen, or a virus selected from the group consisting of human immunodeficiency virus (type 1 or 2), influenza virus, herpes simplex virus (type 1 or 2), Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegalovirus, respiratory syncytial virus, hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus, and administering the oligonucleotide to the individual having the disease.

18. (Currently amended) A method for reducing side effects of splenomegaly and depletion of platelets of a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide administered to a mammal, comprising:

(a) modifying the C and/or G of each CpG dinucleotide present in the oligonucleotide with a 2'-O-methyl; wherein the oligonucleotide ~~has~~ consists of from 17 to 35 nucleotides ~~and is~~ complementary to ~~a~~ a genomic region or gene that is aberrantly expressed, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein such genomic region or gene or RNA transcript is from a eukaryotic or prokaryotic pathogen, or a virus selected from the group consisting of human immunodeficiency virus (type 1 or 2), influenza virus, herpes simplex virus (type 1 or 2), Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegalovirus, respiratory syncytial virus, hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus; and

(b) administering the oligonucleotide to the mammal,

wherein administration of the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide results in fewer side effects than the administration of an unmodified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide.

19. (Currently amended) A method for reducing side effects of splenomegaly and depletion of platelets of a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide comprising modifying the C and/or G of each CpG dinucleotide present in the oligonucleotide with a 2'-O-methyl, wherein the oligonucleotide ~~has~~ consists of from 17 to 35 nucleotides ~~and is~~ complementary to ~~a~~ a genomic region or gene that is aberrantly expressed, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein such genomic region or gene or RNA transcript is from a eukaryotic or prokaryotic pathogen, or a virus selected from the group consisting of human immunodeficiency virus (type 1 or 2), influenza virus, herpes simplex virus (type 1 or 2), Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegalovirus, respiratory syncytial virus, hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus.